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NEW PLANTS FROM THE 1934 EXPEDITION

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U. S. Department of Agriculture

Dr. N. E. Hansen, State College, Brookings, South Dakota, returned October 19, 1934 from a four months tour to Soviet Russia. His son, Carl A. Hansen, Brookings, South Dakota, accompanied him as Technical Assistant. The tour was made at the invitation of the Soviet government through the Lenin Academy of Agricultural Sciences at Leningrad. The tour extended as far east as Shilka, on the north branch of the East Siberian railway, at the headwaters of the Amur river.

Program for 1935: By special request a plan or program of work for the agricultural experiment stations is to be prepared and sent back for use next spring and succeeding years in the Soviet Union. A comparative survey of the work in fruit-breeding and agricultural exploration in both countries will make possible more rapid progress at this time.

Dr. Hansen has made a total of eight tours of agricultural exploration including, Europe, Asia, and north Africa, and twelve tours to western Canada.

The seeds and plants collected upon this seventh tour of agricultural exploration to Russia will be propagated as rapidly as possible for distribution, and announced in the spring list of Northern Plant Novelties, usually published in January of each year. The following is a partial list of plants and seeds collected:

1. A Siberian apricot which is another species from the one brought by Dr. Hansen from Manchuria in 1924. This makes possible a new race, hardy in all parts of the prairie northwest.

2. The Siberian form of the Crested Wheat Grass which was first brought to America by Dr. Hansen in his 1897-8 tour from the Volga river region and is now recommended by the U. S. Department of Agriculture as the best grass for the western plains.

3. Soy beans from their northern limit in the Amur river region.

4. Many new Russian and Siberian apples, plums, pears and cherries, including a red cherry from the Ural mountains.

5. Seeds of new Proso grain millets from Afghanistan.

6. Seed of the native grass from which Soviet Russia is developing a perennial wheat.

7. Seed of new frost-resistant and blight-resistant potatoes from South America, from which Russia is breeding an entirely new type of potatoes strongly resistant to frost and completely immune to the late blight which frequently destroys the potato crop. It was late blight which caused the potato famine in Ireland many years ago.

8. Two native rubber plants from Central Asia which are now being cultivated on a large scale. This work is still in the experimental stage.

9. The Chinese elm is of great importance because it is completely immune to Dutch elm disease which is devastating the elms of Europe and the eastern United States. Many of the Chinese elms introduced so far have come from too far south. The present is the most northern importation made.

10. Many other seeds were collected, including some choice wild flowers and the East Siberian wild peony.

A Search for Hardy Apricots

The hardy apricots of the world are to be found in North Manchuria and East Siberia. The following is from my Spring List issued by the Department of Horticulture, State College, Brookings, South Dakota, March 24, 1934:

Manchu Apricot, Nos. 1-23

Offered for the first time. In my 1924 tour to north Manchuria, home of the old Manchu conquerors of China, I became interested in the apricots native of the region between Harbin, on the Siberian railway, and the Amur River. This section of China comes up like a wedge into eastern Siberia and is cut through by the Siberian railway. The conditions are really those of east Siberia on either side with minimum temperature of about 47 degrees below zero Fahrenheit. I saved seed from many fruits and now have 32 seedlings. All of these are of excellent quality. The size varies more or less and there is no good chance to determine the relative superiority as the seedlings were planted very closely in the row. They are offered herewith for preliminary trial as Manchu Nos. 1--23 inclusive. So far, 23 out of the 32 seedlings have been budded. The trees are a beautiful sight in bloom. The large flowers, white with distinct pink tinge, appear early before the leaves. The fruit is yellow, somewhat smaller than the apricots of commerce, and makes delicious preserves.

Announcement December 15, 1934

There will be no trees of the Manchu apricots available for Spring 1935. There were no plum seedlings available for budding in 1933 and 1934. The original Manchu apricot trees are still flourishing but scions are not usually acceptable to amateurs. The scions of all new fruit trees is one dollar per foot as far as available.

I returned October 19, 1934 from my seventh tour of agricultural exploration to Russia. This tour was made at the invitation of the Lenin Academy of Agricultural Sciences at Leningrad. Many new seeds and plants were collected.

East Siberian Apricots

It will interest you to know that on this 1934 tour I found another species of apricot in East Siberia which will be still hardier than the Manchu and will also be propagated as rapidly as possible. A lot of good plum pits were picked this year so we hope to have seedlings for budding this year and next year.

N. E. Hansen
Professor of Horticulture
State College
Brookings, South Dakota

A Survey for the Survey

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A. J. ...
Professor of ...
State College
... ..